

2005

Illinois State Board of Education

Comprehensive Strategic Plan for Elementary and Secondary Education



Rod R. Blagojevich, Governor
Jesse H. Ruiz, Chairman
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Mission and Vision

Mission

The Illinois State Board of Education will provide leadership, advocacy and support for the work of school districts, policymakers and citizens in making Illinois education second to none.

Vision

The Illinois public schools will enable all students to succeed in post-secondary education and career opportunities, to be effective life-long learners and to participate actively in our democracy.

The Process

As it works to implement this Comprehensive Strategic Plan for Elementary and Secondary Education, the Illinois State Board of Education pledges to:

1. seek feedback and meaningful discussion with others;
2. track and measure feedback, success rates and costs;
3. work collaboratively;
4. identify best practices for the State Board of Education, schools and education professionals
5. link Illinois State Board of Education divisions to create a team approach and build agency capacity; and
6. provide extraordinary assistance to schools with the lowest fiscal resources.



About this Plan

Pursuant to Public Act 93-1036, the Illinois State Board of Education has developed this report of a five-year Comprehensive Strategic Plan for Elementary and Secondary Education in Illinois. The Plan reflects input from education constituents and thoughtful deliberation by the members of the Board and the staff of the Illinois State Board of Education.

The plan focuses on three primary goal areas: enhancing literacy; improving educator quality for all children; and expanding data-driven management and school support practices. Within these goal areas, specific objectives address topics from early childhood and teacher recruitment to best teaching practices and shared service initiatives for schools. Each strategic objective directly relates to the topic areas set forth in Public Act 93-1036.

Areas of Special Focus and Attention

As education leaders for Illinois, an essential part of the work of the State Board of Education is to assist schools and districts in building capacity for continuous improvement.

With that outcome in mind and following much thought, input, and deliberation, the State Board of Education has identified and set forth certain initiatives in this Strategic Plan for special focus and attention. The goals, objectives and initiatives herein are not intended to be inclusive of all the critical and meaningful functions of the Illinois State Board of Education. The absence of specific mention in this plan does not diminish the importance of any service or function of the Illinois State Board of Education.

Learning Standards and Assessment

At the core of every function and activity of the Illinois State Board of Education is the achievement of student learning outcomes measured against the Illinois Learning Standards. The goals, objectives and initiatives contained in this Strategic Plan—in conjunction with our system of assessment frameworks and performance indicators—are intended to assist in ultimately reaching these learning outcomes for every student in Illinois.



GOAL

Enhancing Literacy

Goal Summary

Foster the *21st Century* literacy skills of reading fluency, numeracy, scientific literacy and global awareness by providing support for effective instruction and broad approaches to impact all students

Strategic Objectives

- Establish literacy as the top educational priority and assist schools in delivering high quality reading skills and literacy instruction beginning in early childhood and continuing through the high school grades (PA 93-1036 Topic Areas: 1, 2, 3)
- Collaborate with other agencies to educate parents on how to be their child's first teachers to stimulate development in reading and writing (PA 93-1036 Topic Areas: 1, 4)
- Assist schools' efforts to create and sustain early childhood and kindergarten program options (including full-day programs for at-risk students) that focus on early language and literacy (PA 93-1036 Topic Areas: 1, 2, 3, 5)
- Collaborate with higher education and other agencies on integrated teacher, paraprofessional and administrator education and professional development programs themed around literacy (PA 93-1036 Topic Areas: 4, 8)



Goal 1 Initiatives – Phase I – Initiate September 1, 2005

- Review current statutory provisions with the purpose of revising current statewide professional development programs for teachers, paraprofessionals and administrators to ensure focus on 21st century literacy skills.
- Collect best practices targeting 21st century literacy skills acquisition at key transition points. Have the best practices reviewed by the appropriate professional educators and disseminate those most recommended best practices.
- Complete and disseminate Spanish language arts standards to support Spanish-language students in accessing content knowledge and obtaining skills necessary for literacy.
- Support ongoing efforts with local, regional and statewide parent-teacher groups to expand parents' role as their children's "first teachers".
- Review recommendations of and work with the Illinois Early Learning Council to coordinate and integrate the continuum of 0-8 services, focusing on 21st century literacy skills.
- Work with CTE groups to undertake CTE curriculum revitalization effort to infuse courses with 21st century literacy skills for meeting core academic requirements.

Goal 1 Initiatives – Phase II – Initiate March 1, 2006

- Review existing partnerships and create new partnerships as appropriate with workforce preparation programs to foster 21st century literacy skills outcomes in career and technical education.
- Expand existing ISBE collaboration efforts to provide increased professional development in literacy and support services for English language learners.
- Collaborate with the Regional Offices of Education/Intermediate Service Centers to provide professional development to teachers, paraprofessionals and administrators on the alignment and transition of pre-kindergarten to kindergarten programs using the early learning standards as the basis.
- Work with Regional Offices of Education (ROE) and Intermediate Service Centers (ISC) to facilitate dialogue at a regional level among all providers to

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expand access and quality in support of universal preschool and expanded kindergarten.

- Collaborate with the various professional associations by supporting their conference and professional development efforts for teachers, paraprofessionals and administrators to integrate 21st century literacy skills with their ongoing training.
- Expand the focus of the Annual Connections Conference and other professional organizational conferences, bringing together pre-service teachers and teacher educators, to include the integration of 21st century literacy skills across the curriculum.

Goal 1 Initiatives – Phase III – Initiate September 1, 2006

- Review existing research and seek recommendations from professional educator groups to determine if a statewide initiative utilizing a train-the-trainer model for the teaching of reading in the content areas at the middle and high school grades should be conducted.
- Emphasize the importance of 21st century literacy skills through a public relations campaign patterned after successful approaches in other states.
- Build upon existing kindergarten focus groups to identify issues specific to kindergarten teachers, paraprofessionals and administrators, including early language and literacy.
- Target principals for professional development in Early Childhood Education.
- Work with professional teacher organizations and curriculum groups to sponsor roundtables for teacher educators across common areas or disciplines to explore avenues for integrating 21st century literacy skills instruction within the disciplines.

Goal 1 Initiatives – Phase IV – Initiate March 1, 2007

- Review the existing State Technology Plan and collaborate with existing State Technology Hubs to develop a change innovation grant program around the integration of technology and 21st century literacy skills.

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- Extend the Reading Block Grant to grades 6-12 with an initial emphasis on exemplary pilot programs in high schools, providing new dollars are appropriated for such purpose. (Need to review existing statute.)
- Work with school and public libraries and librarians to sponsor activities and promote awareness around parents' roles in the emergent/early literacy of their children.
- Develop parent institutes and the distribution of literacy support materials through collaboration with the Regional Offices of Education and Intermediate Service Centers.
- Create a web-based "Early Childhood/Kindergarten Corner" site for sharing resources and best practices information.

Goal 1 Initiatives – Phase V – Initiate September 1, 2007

- Offer ISBE Early Childhood training to Head Start and childcare providers, and include a well-defined parent involvement program as a requirement for each Early Childhood Block Grant recipient.
- Coordinate with the Department of Human Services and Children and Family Services to ensure that child care programs provide information to parents on the development of their children's reading and writing skills.
- Support pilot programs in teacher education and administrative preparation which have a theme or focus on 21st century literacy skills
- Partner with the corporate and cultural sectors and public sector arts educators for an arts education initiative that complements the acquisition of 21st century literacy skills.
- Convene a conference to encourage foreign language instruction in primary grades.
- Facilitate dialogue and training for K-12 educational leaders on how to build professional learning communities around the issue of literacy in each school building in Illinois.



GOAL

Improving Educator Quality for All Children

Goal Summary

Expand and improve the pool of highly qualified educators by supporting the preparation, recruitment and retention of educators with expertise both in content areas and child development

Strategic Objectives

- Collaborate with higher education and other agencies to ensure educators have the preparation and background to teach successfully in rural and urban settings and work with at-risk students (PA 93-1036 Topic Areas: 8, 12, 14)
- Provide high quality professional development in “best practices” for teachers, paraprofessionals and administrators working in schools struggling to meet AYP (PA 93-1036 Topic Areas: 11, 14)
- Work with higher education and other entities to develop school leaders who are successful in raising student achievement (PA 93-1036 Topic Areas: 14)
- Develop strategies to recruit, induct, mentor and retain educators to serve “hard-to-staff” schools for at least five years (PA 93-1036 Topic Areas: 12, 14)
- Create networks (including online resources) to provide support, induction and mentoring, especially for first-year teachers and those teachers moving from initial to standard certification (PA 93-1036 Topic Areas: 8, 10, 14)



Goal 2 Initiatives – Phase I – Initiate September 1, 2005

- Review existing approval and accreditation model for higher education preparation programs to ensure the ability of pre-service educators to work successfully with all students and collaborate with all partners to develop a new process.
- Expand advanced placement opportunities in Illinois high schools through professional development activities and expanded course offerings.
- Collaborate with public and private colleges of education to research first-year teacher education graduates in Illinois to determine needs for support, induction, mentoring and work with higher education institutions in responding to those needs.
- Establish a successful practices network by collaborating with professional organizations for promising high schools to provide leadership in bringing effective secondary practices to scale.
- Work with public and private colleges of education and professional educator groups to revise and streamline the system of Illinois certification to support the efforts of all Illinois educators to be highly qualified.

Goal 2 Initiatives – Phase II – Initiate March 1, 2006

- Promote the understanding and utilization of the social/emotional learning standards as part of the teacher education curriculum.
- Review established and existing induction models to develop a framework to provide high quality induction and mentoring programs for access by all new teachers in the state.
- Research and develop potential of utilizing the visiting teacher exchange program with the Spanish ministry of Education for Teacher Recruitment (as well as a similar imitative in Puerto Rico).
- Work with other states to increase avenues for certification reciprocity.

Goal 2 Initiatives – Phase III – Initiate September 1, 2006

- Review existing teacher education scholarships with Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC), Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) and

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professional teacher organizations for the purpose of determining what incentive policies and legislative proposals are needed to attract teachers to high-need areas and hard-to- staff schools (based upon data from the Annual Educator Supply and Demand Study).

- Review the recommendations of studies completed on induction and mentoring programs for Illinois principals to determine what immediate action needs to be taken.
- Convene a work group to take action steps indicated by review of statewide studies on induction and mentoring programs for Illinois principals.

Goal 2 Initiatives – Phase IV – Initiate March 1, 2007

- Collaborate with the Regional Offices of Education, Intermediate Services Centers and other relevant organizations to provide professional development for paraprofessionals and other ancillary instructional personnel.
- Collaborate with groups to bring models for teacher recruitment, induction, and retention to scale statewide.
- Review recommendations from statewide studies of administrator preparation and convene a work group to take indicated action steps.

Goal 2 Initiatives – Phase V – Initiate September 1, 2007

- Review existing statutes regarding professional development, and collaborate with professional teacher and administrator organizations to create a professional development framework for dissemination to schools and districts which supports job-embedded learning and coaching strategies for teachers, paraprofessionals and administrators for sustained, ongoing instructional improvement.
- Review and support existing initiatives to improve school working conditions that discourage potential educators from choosing the profession or that leads to a higher rate of out-migration among existing teachers.
- Research the methodology and implement in each high school a sponsored student organization that promotes teaching as a career and targets our highest achieving students.



Expanding Data-Informed School Management and Support Practices

Goal Summary

Support the utilization of data to assist school districts in providing more effective operational practices, opportunities to pool shared services and flexibility in balancing their budgets to increase educational outcomes

Strategic Objectives

- Establish a variety of shared service and cost-savings initiatives (PA 93-1036 Topic Areas: 2, 4, 7)
- Leverage new state revenues to obtain public and private matching funds for innovative programs and services tied to the strategic planning initiatives (PA 93-1036 Topic Areas: 3)
- Provide or broker expert fiscal guidance, including online support services, for school districts (PA 93-1036 Topic Areas: 2, 3, 7)
- Foster and provide additional incentives for school district reorganization of multiple types (PA 93-1036 Topic Areas: 7, 13)
- Increase school-based technology for data-informed decision making at the building level, reflecting greater access to educational research and outcomes evaluation for school improvement (PA 93-1036 Topic Areas: 6, 9, 10)
- Establish a consistent role for the Regional Offices of Education and Intermediate Service Centers to be key providers of support services and hold them accountable for service delivery in conjunction with ISBE's responsibility to provide them with technical and fiscal support (PA 93-1036 Topic Areas: 4, 15)
- Notify and assist school districts with the ability to access CMS master contracts when available.

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- Explore the use of multi-state consortia to accomplish ongoing and strategic plan initiatives.

Goal 3 Initiatives – Phase I – Initiate September 1, 2005

- Convene a reorganization workgroup to explore additional options and incentives for legislative proposals to increase the number of school district reorganizations.
- Assess second-generation technology needs in school districts and advocate for funding proposals to meet those needs.

Goal 3 Initiatives – Phase II – Initiate March 1, 2006

- Expand the Illinois School Purchasing Network to include a wider variety of shared services, including cooperative purchasing contracts from Regional Offices of Education/Intermediate Service Centers.
- Create online management templates to support a variety of functional and instructional requirements and applications.
- Develop a suite of services and interventions for assisting Illinois' most chronically fiscally distressed school districts (along with their Financial Oversight Panels or School Finance Authorities) to resolve their financial crises.
- Create and implement a series of functional service frameworks with Regional Offices of Education/ Intermediate Service Centers to outline state and regional roles and responsibilities, and to standardize the nature of technical and fiscal support to school districts in the same manner of the mentoring/induction and professional development frameworks (e.g., Certification; Accountability; Business Services).

Goal 3 Initiatives – Phase III – Initiate September 1, 2006

- Develop a web-based tracking system to monitor the effectiveness of supplemental educational service providers.
- Collaborate with business consulting groups and related organizations to create online “toolkits” for a variety of school management functions.

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- Explore expanding access and offerings within the Illinois Virtual High School network.
- Expand support of the Illinois Interactive Report Card and collaborate with outside groups to make it available to every Illinois school, along with professional development for teachers, paraprofessionals and administrators for its optimal utilization.

Goal 3 Initiatives – Phase IV – Initiate March 1, 2007

- Seek foundation, grant, and other private external support for innovative programs and practices, as well as for targeted needs in schools.
- Expand the network of ISBE Regional Financial Consultants statewide, with the goal of having a cadre of consultants available to each Regional Office of Education/Intermediate Service Centers area.
- Create a comprehensive data warehouse to foster and support more highly informed decision making by all ISBE constituents.
- Expand the statewide database for teachers – and instructional program – specific data for all areas of career and technical education (beyond just agriculture education).

Goal 3 Initiatives – Phase V – Initiate September 1, 2007

- Explore options for the growth and development of the ISBE Special Purpose Trust Fund.
- Research the feasibility of reorganizing special education districts and education-for-employment systems statewide to align with Regional Office of Education/Intermediate Service Centers or Community College District boundaries after seeking the input of all affected entities.
- Create an online clearinghouse for locally developed performance assessments that could be accessed by schools statewide.
- Develop toolkits for classroom teachers to identify and address supplemental teaching of Learning Standards absent from State tests, e.g. Health, Fine Arts.
- Partner with public and private higher education institutions to expand and ease access for teachers to acquire additional training or advanced degrees in Mathematics and Science with an emphasis on teaching methodologies.



A Final Note

This document represents an important starting point for a five-year Strategic Plan that will evolve and grow to meet the constantly changing needs of communities, schools and students in Illinois.

Progress on meeting each Initiative in this Strategic Plan will be tracked through the utilization of a *Performance Progress and Metric* template and reported to the State Board of Education on a quarterly basis.

The State Board will also evaluate the overall appropriateness of the Plan on an annual basis, making needed changes and additions to ensure that it remains a compelling document to lead educational change in Illinois.

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